tonnes of foodgrains were held by the Food Corporation of India in open storage due to lack of adequate covered storage capacity.

(b) and (c) Food Corporation of India has taken the following steps in order to protect its stocks in open storage from rains:—

(i) stocks are stored under cover-and-plinth (CAP) arrangement with proper drainage and dunnage;

(ii) stocks are covered with polythene covers and lashed with nylon ropes;

(iii) aeration of stocks in the open is undertaken during clear weather to maintain the health of grains; and

(iv) periodic inspection is undertaken to control insect infestation, damage by rodents, birds etc.

Procurement of Wheat

404. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that procurement of wheat by Government from farmers continues till middle of June every year whereas the purchasing was stopped about 15—20 days earlier this year;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the procurement price of wheat in Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh had thus dropped drastically from Rs. 157 to Rs. 145 per quintal resulting in great loss to the farmers;

(d) whether Government propose to enquire into the reasons for which procurement of wheat by the Government of India had stopped 20 days earlier; and

(e) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (RAO BIRENDRA SINGH): (a), (b), (d) and (e). The Rabi Marketing Season is from the first of April to the end of March, during which wheat procurement takes place. In the current season, procurement of wheat under price support is still continuing.

(c) The procurement/support price of 'Fair Average Quality' wheat, which is uniform throughout the country, has been Rs. 157 per quintal since the commencement of the current season, and farmers are free to sell their wheat to the procuring agencies at that price.

Central Assistance for drought in States

405. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that serious drought situation is prevailing in various States in the country due to the failure of rains during the period from April 1985 to June 1985;

(b) what is the estimated loss of the crops which have been destroyed/damaged as a result thereof; and

(c) whether the Central Government have provided any relief to the drought affected States and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR): (a) Yes, Sir. The States of Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra reported drought conditions during the period April to June, 1985.

(b) According to the Governments of the above States, 105.48 lakh hectares of cropped area have been affected in varying degrees due to drought conditions in these States.

(c) A ceiling of Central assistance of Rs. 181.71 crores has been sanctioned to these states except Himachal Pradesh. The report of central team on drought in Himachal Pradesh is being processed.

However, pending the issue of final sanction, a Ways and Means Advance of Rs. 15.00 crores has been released to the Government of Himachal Pradesh for carrying out relief measures in the affected areas.

Increase in price of essential commodities

406. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:

SHRI RAMCHANDRA BHARADWAJ:

SHRI J. P. GOYAL:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact there has been considerable increase in the prices of essential commodites in the country;

(b) what are the comparative figures for the corresponding period during the last two years;

(c) what are the reasons for the increasing trend in the prices of essential commodities; and

(d) what steps are being taken by Government to bring down the prices of essential commodities?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (RAO BIRENDRA SINGH): (a) There has been some increase in the prices of essential commodities during the past three months. However, during the same period the prices of some commodities like edible oils and wheat have moved down or have remained steady.

(b) The relevant figures are given in Annexure. [*See* Appendix CXXXV Annexure No. 6.]

(c) The increase in the prices of essential commodities may be mainly attributed to the seasonalty factor, increase in freight and production constraints as in the case of sugar.

(d) The main thrust of the Government policy is to increase the production of essential commodities particularly the ones which are in short supply. The public distribution system is being expanded and improved. Some commodities are imported to supplement domestic supplies. The export of essential commodities is regulated. Measures are also being taken to enforce fiscal discipline and for keeping the aggregate liquidity under control.

Living Conditions in Resettlement Colonies in Delhi

407. SHRI RAM NARESH KUSHAWAHA: Will the Minister of WORKS AND HOUSING be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item which appeared in the "Hindustan Times" dated 19th June, 1985 regarding the living conditions and lack of basic amenities in the resettlement colonies in Delhi; and

(b) if so, what measures have been taken by Government to improve the situation and to ensure effective coordination between the various agencies concerned for their proper development?

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND HOUSING (SHRI ABDUL GHAFOOR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government has already sanctioned a scheme for provision of additional facilities in the resettlement colonies, like laying of sewer and water lines for grant of individual water and sewer connections, improved roads and drains and over head and under ground tanks. The scheme is under execution with the Delhi Development Authority.

The Delhi Electric Supply Undertaking has reported that the position of distribution system, including street lighting in these colonies is by and large satisfactory. The power break downs which occurred in Khichripur resettlement colony due to damage to over-head lines in the heavy storm recently has been attended to and two